

Now this is more than we claim. To be called fanatic, thoughtless and superficial is no more than we would expect from the advocates of the saloon and its accompanying vices, but we did not expect it from our own side who should chime in with us against this monster evil.

When we held our State Convention here last Oct., we were not compelled to go to a licensed house to secure entertainment for our delegates. We have never had any regrets over ridding our town of the saloon and some of its accompanying vices.

Let us use every possible means for regenerating the unregenerated and also use all honorable and legitimate means in bringing about better moral conditions of our country. And by so doing we will only fill the sphere in which God has placed us and will vacate the little two by four spot which so many occupy.

#### WHAT IS DEATH?

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This is a question which thousands have asked, but to which no satisfactory answer has yet been given. The death's dark empire extends thru all time and all lands, tho we see his work performed every day, there is yet a mystery over the grave which no human being can solve, clouds which none can dispel. Tho men can converse intelligibly as to the action of blood and nerves, the action of the heart and lungs, and explain the physical phenomenon of death, the minister can lead you beyond the grave, show you the connection between this world and the next, and thus give comfort in a dying hour. But neither the physician of the body or mind can lift the veil which hangs over the passage between this world and the land of shades.

The fear of death arises, to some extent, from a natural instinct which is implanted by our creator in the bosom of every living thing. Man looks upon the grave with a shudder; the soulless beast shrinks from death, as if he were endowed with mind and reason; and the unconscious member of the vegetable kingdom naturally resists that which would wither its bloom. Man, made in the image or his God, down thru all that has life or progress, there seems to be a shrinking from death.

From whence does this arise? Surely not from the physical distress of dying. It is the universal testimony of those who have spoken on this subject, that the pains of dying are generally few. More is often suffered in a moment in life, than from all the pangs of death. Years ago before the Science of medicine was understood, some men considered it a mercy to hasten the end of those who were deemed incurable. Parents strangled their children, and children their parents, to end their suffering. But no idea could be more erroneous, nor any custom more absurd and cruel. What appears to us to be the contortions of physical anguish, are frequently merely the effects of disease upon the body the pains of which do not reach the soul.

Men know that death, in its physical anguish does not equal the pains which they suffer in this life, and which often arises from the most trivial cause. The exposure of a nerve in a decayed tooth, the breaking of a limb, if we can believe the testimony of the dying, has often more anguish than the last struggle itself. Hence we must look to some other source for an explanation of the universal horror of dying.

St. Paul explains the secret, "The sting of death is sin." Whether death would ever have been in our world, had not sin entered first, we scarcely know. We can hardly conceive of any arrangement by which bodies such as we have now could be kept in this world forever. And yet we know not how much they were changed by the fall of our first parents. They might have been imperishable once, but changed and corrupted in consequence of transgression. The body of Christ is now on high; it waits for the last judgment; it has been incorruptible eighteen hundred years, and it will remain incorruptible forever. If death was the appointed passage from earth to heaven, from terrestrial to celestial life, man would lie down and die as calmly as he retires to sleep at night. He would enter the grave with as much composure as he now enters his own dwelling, shutting the door behind him.

Whatever physical suffering death brings with it, whatever pains it administers to its victims, whatever fears of mind and dread of the future state it yields, may all be set down to the account of sin. When we see our friends in anguish, when we witness the contortions of his body, and hear him tell you the awful forebodings, that all will not be well beyond the grave, you may say, "Oh sin this is thy work." When you see the hearse rolling along to the sepulcher, to deposit its burden there, when you see a whole family arrayed in mourning, and whole communities stricken with grief, we can truly say, "sin thou hast done this."

How often does the parent blame God for the removal of his child; how often does the husband murmur at God because his wife is removed; how often is God, the sinless one, made the cause of the heavy woes which roll our way; how often does the dying sinner curse his Maker for those frightful visions of future retributions which throng around him and flit before him? But why blame God, why complain of the Almighty? Sin has done, sin will continue to do it. God did indeed take your child, your wife, your friend, but sin made it necessary, and every pang which wrung the heart, and every sorrow which swept thru the soul was the result of sin. Blame sin, curse sin, hate sin.

Brother Paul says, "The strength of sin is the Law." Where there is no law, sin is not imputed. Had God given no law to man, he had not known sin. Sin is indeed sin, wherever it is committed. Murder is murder, theft is theft, by who ever done. The child may lie, but to its offense there will be no strength. There is no sense of wrong. God

nor man will not hold the child responsible. The child is not a responsible person. But let him grow up to manhood, and the law comes, it is now responsible, and cannot do the same sin with out fearful guilt. The law is of various kinds. The written law, the law in every man's own conscience, and the universal convictions as to right and wrong. We have the law on paper, the heathen have the law written more imperfectly indeed on the heart. Each one is a law unto himself, his conscience accusing or excusing him. This law gives sin its terrible strength, alters the very character of our transgressions, and places us in a new attitude before God. Sin was in the world before law came, but man was not charged with it because his mind was not informed, his judgment was not enlightened, and his conscience was not alive. There was a time when there was in the world no law against polygamy. It was as much wrong then as it is now. The offense was of no force, because the law had not forbidden it. But when the law came, the arrangement of society which had appeared to be a virtue was seen to be a vice, and none could commit it without great guilt. The days of this ignorance "God winked at," but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.

We can now see the reason why men dread the dying hour, and put it as far off as possible. They have had a law and broken it. They are about to enter into the presence of Him who made the law, and pass a severe trial. The sinner knows he cannot do it. He feels his inability to meet its violated and insulted claims. He is the criminal conducted by death down thru a passage long, dark, damp and dismal, into the presence of an all-seeing God, where before an assembled world he is to be tried. The sting of every criminal's sorrow is his crime; the strength of his crime is the sacredness of the law he has broken. Arrest and imprisonment have no sting; if there be no crimes.

The object of Christ's coming into the world was to change the relations between death and man, to remove its terrors. Before Christ came all was dark and dismal. The disciples of the old philosophers could learn nothing from their teachers on the subject. Between the wisest man and the future state, a thick veil was drawn and the glories of the one were concealed from the blinded eyes of the other. But Christ astonished the world by the announcement of a future life, removed the blank uncertainty which was around death, and arrayed eternity in new forms of beauty and attractions. But there is another view in which Christ achieved a victory over death, and thus enabled us to share His conquest, and become the partakers of His triumph. By His own death He brought death itself into subjection, changed it from a tyrant to a servant, and now lives to give all his people deliverance from its power. Faith in Christ, in His atonement entitles us to all the benefits of His crucifixion, in which is included a complete and everlasting victory over death and the grave.